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FRIDAY
AUGUST 13, 1954

There was a blast this morning from Secretary Dulles in reply to Dillon's report of his conversation yesterday with Mendès. Dillon discussed the message with Mendès today. The three pertinent telegrams are interesting and are as follows:

"TO: SECSTATE WASHINGTON. NIACT. 603. August 12, 1954. 2:00 PM.

"INFO: LONDON 135, BONN 89, MOSCOW 26.

"I saw Mendès-France for about 45 minutes this morning in company with Reilly, as Jebb is still on vacation. Mendès opened by saying that the difficulties facing him on EDC had proved even greater than he had expected. He said that his position was personally most difficult as many of those who had been strong and consistent supporters of his government are strongly opposed to any EDC type of solution. He said that he will have to lose many votes from the right and among the Socialists and will have to replace them with votes from parties who have been consistently opposed to him, i.e., MRP. He said this made his task unpleasant and difficult.

"He then said that he is submitting preliminary drafts of his ideas to a cabinet meeting scheduled for 11:30 this morning, and he hopes that a definite governmental position will be established in the ministerial meeting scheduled for Friday afternoon. He said it was possible however that an additional meeting would be required on Saturday morning.

"He said he expected the resignations of some anti-EDC Ministers and possibly rpt possibly also some pro-EDC Ministers. However, he said his present expectation was that the resignations would be rather limited in number and 3 mentioned 3, 4, or 5 as an example of his ideas. He said he plans to distribute the responsibility for these ministries on an interim basis among the remaining members of his cabinet. If the government should survive the EDC debate he would then remake his government on a permanent basis.

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"Mendès then said that the pressure on him personally was very strong and that it came from people and parties who had always supported him. He felt he had to take their views into account and it was because of this that he would suggest changes when he went to Brussels. Mendès said he still hoped and expected to circulate his proposals to the EDC countries and to the US and UK on Saturday the 14th, but it was possible that this might be delayed for one day. In talking of the Brussels Conference he mentioned in passing that the Saar would have to be discussed as well as his ideas for changes in EDC Treaty.

"Mendès then came to the main point of his interview, which was the following:

"He said he felt that the changes which he would suggest in the EDC Treaty would not of themselves be sufficient to guarantee passage at this time. He said he felt that he must take account of the Russian proposals for a further meeting on Germany and the effect these proposals had had on French public opinion and in Parliament. He said he was under no illusions that there would be any chance of a favorable result from a Four-Power meeting in the situation as it stands today. However, he said he did not know what the Russians would do in the next two weeks.

"Mendès said that John's press interview was obviously directed entirely against France and was an attempt to defeat the EDC. He said he did not feel that John's statements would have any effect but that they were indicative of Russian tactics and, therefore, he would not be surprised if the Russians made some other move within the next two weeks.

"He said that pressure for another meeting with the Russians on Germany was very great. Nevertheless, he was not prepared to accept discussions at this time as they would be of no use. However, he felt that after the National Assembly had passed the EDC in first reading, a position of strength would have been

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created which might rpt might make possible further negotiations. He felt that the reply to the Russian note should be made around the first of September after the EDC had been passed in first reading and that this reply should not rpt not accept the Russian offer for negotiations, but neither should it give the appearance of closing the door to such negotiations. If the Russians should give some proof of willingness to negotiate reasonably on Germany, he felt that the West should be agreeable to holding another Four-Power Conference. He said that if there should be no further meeting with the Russians, it was imperative that the West, particularly France, show that they were not responsible for the failure to meet.

"Mendès then said that the time table for EDC ratification fortunately fitted this thesis. He said he had inquired of Rome regarding the length of time that would be required for Italy to ratify the EDC and had been informed that completion of the Italian ratification process could not be expected until some time in December. He said the French Assembly would recess probably the end of the first week in September and this would not in any event allow time for consideration of EDC by the Council of the Republic. French Parliament would reconvene during the latter part of October and at that time EDC would come up in the Council of the Republic. He then said that the Council of the Republic was more strongly anti-EDC than the National Assembly, but he seemed far less positive on this point than in any previous discussions I have had with him. Whereas previously he has always stated that there was a constitutional majority against the EDC in the Senate, today he confined himself to saying that the Senate would probably vote against the EDC and might even do so by a constitutional majority.

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"He then said that the National Assembly would consider the EDC in second reading toward the end of November and would complete the ratification process probably in early December, either at the same time or slightly before the completion of the ratification process in Italy. He pointed out that this would give ample time for another attempt to reach an agreement with the Russians during which time the Russians would clearly be on notice as to what the alternative would be. He said it was most important for French public opinion that it be made very clear that the Russians were solely responsible for any lack of progress.

"In answer to a question of mine, he said that the French were completing a draft of a reply to the Russian note embodying these ideas which should be ready for submission to the Working Group in London tomorrow. He said there was no great hurry in completing the draft as he would not want to make any reply until around September 1, after EDC debate.

"In answer to a further question from me, he said he would want to make some statement during the course of the EDC debate as to what his position was on the Russian note. This would be necessary to obtain the extra votes which he felt were necessary. He said he realized such a statement would have to be very carefully worded so as neither to indicate acceptance of the Russian request for a conference, nor refusal. It should indicate that the door was being kept open and that the Russians were being encouraged to give some sign of willingness to negotiate. I purposely did not ask him if he wished the US to associate themselves with him in such a statement during the course of EDC debate, and he did not at this time make any such request.

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[redacted] Mendès replied that he felt such a position would be impossible for him as he was sure he did not have the political strength to obtain the completion of the ratification process unless the Russians had been given the opportunity for another conference, and that the holding of such a conference had been made impossible by Russian intransigeance, or alternatively, that such a Conference had been held and had failed to achieve any results.

"Mendès then said that in yesterday's cabinet meeting two ministers, who had been consistently anti-EDC, said that if such a course were followed regarding Russian negotiations, they would feel that they would have to change their position to one of support for EDC.

"Mendès asked that the greatest care be taken to keep these opinions of his in strictest confidence, so as to facilitate his task during the coming days. He said that a leak in this morning's Figaro had been most unfortunate but that in spite of this he wanted to emphasize his desire that these views of his be treated in strictest confidence for the time being.

"In closing Mendès said he wanted to reemphasize that, because of the Italian time table for ratification, his proposal would not cause any delay in the entry into force of EDC. DILLON."

"FROM: WASHINGTON. August 13, 1954. 6:39 am.

"ACTION: PARIS 552. 12 August, 11 P.M.

"NIACT SENT PARIS 552 RPTD INFO NIACT LONDON 879 BONN 420 MOSCOW 109.

"FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY.

"Mendès-France's plans as reported URTEL 603 have deeply shocked and disheartened me. I am most anxious that he fully understand their implications as I see them before taking any irrevocable action. Accordingly, please convey to him the following points from me.

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"1. Mendès France has said that he would obtain French decision on question of German rearmament before adjournment of present assembly this summer. In our own plans and in our presentations to Congress, we have relied on this assurance and I have said I believed this assurance reliable. To impose a new delaying condition prior to completion of ratification process will be considered by all concerned here as final evidence that the last hope has proved vain.

"2. The proposal to hold still another meeting with Soviets before completion ratification will be considered here as further proof of French unreliability. Berlin meeting, which was intended to satisfy European opinion that the West was seeking in every possible way to reduce tension clearly demonstrated Soviet fundamental purpose to block EDC and destroy defenses of West. If Mendès-France now proposes defer final action on EDC pending still another meeting, this country will be convinced that France cannot be counted on as a reliable partner able to reach decisions.

"3. Implications of Mendès-France's position as outlined to you are equally serious. It would undermine very basis of Franco-American relations and future of NATO alliance. His position seems to me to amount to this: That France is prepared to abandon EDC if Soviets will agree to unify Germany by free elections. This can only mean that France is prepared to agree to neutralize Germany as basis for unification. A neutralized Germany will completely destroy NATO defense plans. Military experts agree that no effective defense strategy can be based on a Europe from which Germany has been excluded. Consequently, if Mendès-France submits to Assembly views outlined to you he will be offering to sacrifice the basis of Western security for German unity. You also know our firm conviction that an attempt to neutralize unified Germany will be illusory and seriously menace European stability and security. This thesis has been keystone of Western policy. The

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Mendès-France proposal would split basic Western position and solidarity, thereby providing Soviets with opportunity they have sought for years.

"4. Finally Mendès-France's proposal would probably destroy Adenauer. Opponents his European policy will exploit Mendès-France's proposal as supporting their thesis that German unity should have priority over EDC. Evidence French acceptance this thesis and further delay in EDC ratification will dismay his supporters and breed further disillusion regarding French intentions.

"5. US remains firmly convinced that our common European policy is basic to Western security. This policy was clearly presented at Berlin. There is not slightest evidence that Soviets are prepared to accept German solution consistent with that security. Indeed their August 4 note states that under present conditions it is not possible to agree on solution of basic questions in Germany and merely holds out prospect of agreement on less important issues. If, asMendès-France seems to feel, the Soviets may make some dramatic offer in near future, it will be soon enough to deal with that when it comes. The West should certainly not do its cause needless damage in advance.

"6. It is of course not for me to pit my judgment of French political situation against that of Mendès-France. I feel, however, that he may perhaps underestimate his own standing and prestige. It is my belief that respect which his decisive actions have won him abroad must also be reflected in French domestic opinion. If this is so, I believe that his forthright support of EDC, based on the fundamental reasons for its soundness, would carry the day despite determined opposition.

"7. Note for Embassy London. Present these views urgently to British at highest level available in effort to secure their support of similar demarche to Mendès-France before noon Friday." DULLES.

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FRIDAY
AUGUST 13, 1954

"TO: SECSTATE WASHINGTON. NIACT. 614. August 13, 1954, 1 pm.

"INFO: LONDON 138, BONN 90, MOSCOW 27.

"Re Deptel 552.

"I saw Mendès-France this morning and went over with him carefully the first six numbered paragraphs of Reftel. He replied as follows to each paragraph:

"1. He stated that his position, as outlined to me yesterday, did not rpt not constitute a new delaying tactic. He said he was moving just as rapidly as he could to obtain ratification. He said that the situation in the French Parliament was very difficult on this subject, and that his present best estimate was that there were between 300 and 310 votes against EDC as of now. He stated he felt that even with such changes as might be agreed upon at Brussels, there would still probably not be a majority for EDC unless it was possible to show that France's decision in favor of EDC is a peaceful one and does not shut the door on negotiations. He feels that only by placing the ratification of EDC in a context where it is used to force the Russians to show their cards and to put them 'au pied du mur' can ratification be assured. He repeated what he had said yesterday that two or three of the anti-EDC Ministers in his cabinet had said that on this basis and this basis only would they support and vote for EDC.

"2. Mendès said he was not rpt not proposing to hold another meeting with the Russians. What he was proposing was to make such a reply to the Soviet notes as would force them to clarify their position. In order to clear the way for another meeting he repeated what he had said yesterday that the Russians must give clear proof of their good intentions by proposing something new. He then mentioned the three subjects listed at the end of the first draft of the Working Group's paper, i.e., agreement to sign an Austrian treaty, or agreement on free elections in Germany, or real progress on disarmament. He emphasized that the Russians must

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give such clear proof before a new meeting could be called and if they made no such concessions there would be no meeting as far as he was concerned. He then said that he is not rpt not deferring action on EDC. He said he is proceeding as he had planned and will put EDC to the French Assembly as a question of confidence in his government. In other words, he will stake the existence of his government on passing the EDC, and therefore he wants to have some chance of a successful result.

"3. Mendès said he could not understand how Dept arrived at the line of thinking contained in this paragraph. He said he is not rpt not in favor of a neutralized Germany. He also said that he had always felt, and still feels that Germany, whether united or not, must be politically and militarily tied to the West.

"4. Mendès said he felt that if the French Assembly should reject the EDC, Adenauer would be in grave difficulties in Germany. However, if the French Assembly should pass EDC he felt that this could only result in strengthening Adenauer's position. He further said that if he could arrive at a Franco-German agreement at Brussels and have this agreement ratified by the French Assembly, he thought it would strengthen both his own and Adenauer's positions, and in this respect their interests were identical.

"5. Mendès said he fully agreed that there was no present evidence that the Soviets are prepared to make any of the concessions required. He referred to his talk with Molotov at Geneva which had been wholly negative in this respect. He said that this is why he is not rpt not prepared to go to a Four-Power Meeting under the present circumstances. In order for him to change his mind regarding a meeting, he would have to have (1) passage of EDC in first reading by the National Assembly and (2) a new proposal from the Russians equivalent to the acceptance of one of the three alternatives proposed in the last draft of the Working Group paper.

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"6. Mendès said he was afraid that the US overestimated his personal prestige when it came to the difficult decision of EDC. He said that discussions in the cabinet showed that his personal prestige did not count for much in this matter. He asked me to emphasize to Washington the extreme difficulty of the Parliamentary situation regarding ratification. He said again that if the Treaty came to a vote as is, it would certainly be rejected. He said that such rejection would, he was afraid, put an unbearable strain on the Western Alliance, and therefore, his whole effort was directed to finding a way to achieve ratification. He then reemphasized the fact that his proposal did not contemplate deferring the entry into force of EDC and stated that in any event French ratification process would be completed before that of Italy. He emphasized that what was important was the decision of the French National Assembly on first reading. He said that after the Assembly had once voted, everyone will know where France stands. He said he is hopeful that constitutional reform will be enacted before consideration by the Assembly on second reading, and will remove the right of the Senate to require a constitutional majority on second reading in the National Assembly. He also is hopeful that there will not be a constitutional majority against the EDC in the Senate. In any event he emphasized that he felt that the decision of the French Assembly on first reading would show the world where France stood and would be a great step toward clarification of the international situation.

"After completing this response to Reftel Mendès reiterated the difficulty of his Parliamentary situation. He said that of the 59 Socialists who were against EDC, only seven would change their position as a result of the action of the Party Congress. He said that he might get another two, three, or four to change their position for personal reasons, but that at least 48 Socialist votes would be cast against ratification. He would also lose a very substantial number of votes

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on the Right. The total of what he would lose would be far larger than what he could gain from the MRP. He reiterated that he felt that the most telling argument for ratification, and in fact the vital argument, will be that the Russians must be forced to show their cards and that the only way to achieve this result is for France to ratify EDC.

"In order to make sure that there had been no misunderstanding, I showed Mendès a copy of Embtel 603 which he read with care. He said that it accurately reflected his position with one slight exception. This is that he does not propose to answer the Russian note 'around the first of September' but rather during the first ten days of September, and specifically after rpt after the French Parliament goes on vacation. DILLON."

Ophuls came to see me this morning. It appears the Chancellor and Hallstein would like to have me, we well as a U.K. observer, invited to the Brussels meeting. I told him I considered this would be injudicious, but said we would arrange to have Hartman and, if it could be done without attracting attention, Tomlinson in Brussels for any consultations desired.

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